DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 381 914 EC 303 860

AUTHOR	Ensign, Arselia, Ed.
TITLE	Better Than Toys: Real Life Skill Development.
INSTITUTION	PAM Assistance Centre, Lansing, MI.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC.; Michigan State Board of Education, Lansing.
PUB DATE	Feb 95
NOTE	4p.
AVAILABLE FROM	PAM Assistance Centre, 601 West Maple St., Lansing, MI 48906-5038 ($10, includes membership; $25, organizational rate).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
JOURNAL CIT	PAM Repeater; n90 Feb 1995
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Active Learning; Basic Skills; Check Lists; Cognitive Development; *Daily Living Skills; *Disabilities; Early Childhood Education; *Experiential Learning; Motor Development; Psychomotor Skills; *Skill Development; *Student Educational Objectives

ABSTRACT

In educating children with disabilities, training for independence should begin early, and the "technology" may be very simple. This paper lists activities designed to increase gross, fine motor, cognitive, and eye-hand coordination skills needed for independent living. It encourages caregivers to engage young children in active learning experiences that help children begin to master their environment, by having them acquire life skills such as those preliminary to cooking, cleaning, and table setting. Eighteen learning activities are suggested. For example, have the child move from matching pictures or shapes to matching socks or putting silverware away, and have the child move from playing with push-button toys to operating radios, computers, or television remote controls. The paper also provides a checklist for writing Individualized Education Program/Individualized Family Service Plan goals and objectives for infants and young children, focusing on functionality, generality, instructional context, measurability, and hierarchical relation between long-range goal and short-term objective. (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 381 914

PAM REPEATER

Better than Toys

NO. 90

February, 1995

ASSISTANCE CENTRE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PUBLISHED AT

PAM Assistance Centre
Physically Impaired Association of Michigan
601 W. Maple Street
Lansing, MI 448906-5038
(517) 371-5897 or
(800) 274-7426

Arselia Ensign, Editor

Real Life Skill Development

Those skills which are so much a part of early learning are frequently enhanced by developmental toys and games. The wonder, charm and importance of toys for children can never be discounted, and modification or adaptations may make them exceptionally valuable for children with disabilities. However, folk wisdom and experience are in accord with current research in suggesting that the home or school environment may offer even more meaningful "low technology" developmental aids for the young child, providing entertainment as well.

There may be a temptation to allow toys to continue to take the place of beginning to master the environment around us. It is often more convenient to allow a child to remain occupied with his toys than to engage him an active learning experience. Toys could become a "cop-out".

Even low functioning children can begin to acquire life skills, such as those preliminary to cooking, cleaning, laundry and table setting. The earliest step in skill training is merely watching. Very minimal involvement is a next step. You may be concerned that the child could injure himself with knives or other risky objects. Use judgment, and begin with simple, safe objects, but do not assume that the child will injure himself without having given him a chance to try.

Perhaps the child seems totally oblivious to the skill, or seems to have no concept of the purpose of the activity. That this is true is very difficult to determine. Can it be proven? Assume that the activity is meaningful, rather than otherwise. Your own attitude is an important factor in the learning process.

In short, educating for independence should begin early, and the "technology" may be very simple. A child may be relatively advanced at one level, and less so at another, but achievement in any area is a great boost for self esteem. Each of the activities included here is designed to increase gross, fine motor, or cognitive skills, or eye-hand-coordination. Continue to look for age-appropriate and functional ways to master these skills.

EC 303 860

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

MOVING FROM THIS	TRY THIS
Using crayons and coloring books	Using paints, markers, and a sketch pad
Learning names of parts of body	Learning to brush teeth, wash face, blow nose
Doing peg board activity (fine motor coordination)	Lacing shoes, making latch hook rug, playing cribbage, using vending machine
Using Monopoly money or pictures of money to learn value of money	Using real money, cashing own check at bank, making purchases
Hugging or kissing everyone you meet	Learning proper greeting: hand shake, pat on shoulder, eye contact
Stacking blocks or rings	Stacking plates, clothes, towels, canned goods or loading the dishwasher
Matching pictures or shapes	Matching socks or putting silverware away
Lacing cardboard items or stringing beads	Lacing shoes, buttoning own shirt
Cutting out paper dolls	Cleaning and cutting up vegetables for dinner
Stringing beads, sewing cards	Putting coins in vending machine, needlepoint, latch hook
Putting toys or blocks in, under, behind the box	Putting canned goods in the pantry, putting garbage under the sink, putting the vacuum behind the door
Pounding toys	Playing a piano or drums
Making snakes with playdough	Taking a pottery class or making bread, cookies
Sorting blocks, beads or nuts and bolts Learning to identify numbers using color cards	Sorting laundry, silverware, groceries (pantry, freezer, bathroom etc.) or items for recycling
Playing with push-button toys for fine motor skills	Operating radio, push-button phone, typewriter/ computer or remote control for TV/VCR
Learning the four food groups	Making a nutritious meal, going shopping, using microwave
Walking with others, exercising	Going for a walk individually or walking your dog
Stacking plastic rings, blocks or beads	Using T.V. remote control, push button phones, microwave

You will probably be able to think of other activities relating to your own home or school situations. Endeavor to develop a skill for a purpose, rather than be satisfied with an activity as an end unto itself.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FUNCTIONALITY

1. **Will the skill increase the child's ability to interact with people and objects within the daily environment?**
   The child needs to perform the skill in all or most of the environments in which he or she interacts
   Skill: Places object into container
   Opportunities: Home—Places sweater in drawer, cookie in paper bag
   School—Places lunch box in cubbyhole, trash in trash bin
   Community—Places milk carton in grocery cart, rocks and soil in flower pot

2. **Will the skill have to be performed by someone else if the child cannot do it?**
   The skill is a behavior or event that is critical for completion of daily routines
   Skill: Looks for object in usual location
   Opportunities: Finds coat on coat rack, gets food from cupboard

GENERALITY

3. **Does the skill represent a general concept or class of responses? The skill emphasizes a generic process, rather than a particular instance.**
   Skill: Fits objects into defined spaces
   Opportunities: Puts mail in mailbox, places crayon in box, puts cutlery into sorter

4. **Can the skill be adapted or modified for a variety of disabling conditions?**
   The child's sensory impairment should interfere as little as possible with the performance
   Skill: Correctly activates simple toy
   Opportunities: Motor impairments—Activates light, easy-to-move toys (e.g., balls, rocking horse, toys on wheels, roly-poly toys)
   Visual impairments—Activates large, bright, noise-making toys (e.g., bells, drums, large rattles)

5. **Can the skill be generalized across a variety of settings, materials, and/or people?**
   The child can perform the skill with interesting materials and in meaningful situations
   Skill: Manipulates two small objects simultaneously
   Opportunities: Home—Builds with small interlocking blocks, threads lace on shoes
   School—Sharpens pencil with pencil sharpener
   Community—Takes coin out of small wallet

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTEXT

6. **Can the skill be taught in a way that reflects the manner in which the skill will be used in daily environments?**
   The skill can occur in a naturalistic manner
   Skill: Uses object to obtain another object
   Opportunities: Uses fork to obtain food, broom to rake toy, steps on stool to reach toy on shelf

7. **Can the skill be elicited easily by the teacher/parent within classroom/home activities?**
   The skill can be initiated easily by the child as part of daily routines
   Skill: Stacks objects
   Opportunities: Stacks books, cups/plates, wooden logs

MEASURABILITY

8. **Can the skill be seen and/or heard?**
   Different observers must be able to identify the same behavior
   Measurable skill: Gains attention and refers to object, person, and/or event
   Nonmeasurable skill: Experiences a sense of self-importance

9. **Can the skill be directly counted (e.g., by frequency, duration, distance measures)?**
   The skill represents a well-defined behavior or activity
   Measurable skill: Grasps pea-sized object
   Nonmeasurable skill: Has mobility in all fingers

10. **Does the skill contain or lend itself to determination of performance criteria?**
    The extent and/or degree of accuracy of the skill can be evaluated
    Measurable skill: Follows one-step directions with contextual cues.
    Nonmeasurable skill: Will increase receptive language skills

HIERARCHICAL RELATION BETWEEN LONG-RANGE GOAL AND SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVE

Is the short-term objective a developmental subskill or step thought to be critical to the achievement of the long-range goal?

Appropriate: Short-Term Objective—Releases object with each hand.
Long-Range-Goal—Places and releases object balanced on top of another object.

Inappropriate:
1. The Short-Term Objective is a restatement of the same skill as the Long-Range-Goal, with the addition of an instructional prompt (e.g., Short-Term Objective—Activates mechanical toy with physical prompt. Long-Range-Goal—Independently activates mechanical toy) or a quantitative limitation to the extent of the skill (e.g., Short-Term Objective—Stacks 5 1-inch blocks. Long-Range-Goal—Stacks 10 1-inch blocks).
2. The Short-Term Objective is not conceptually or functionally related to the Long-Range-Goal (e.g., Short-Term Objective— Releases object voluntarily. Long-Range-Goal—Pokes with index finger)

Source: Putting Real - Life Skills into the IEP/IFSPs for Infants and Young Children," by Angela R. Notari - Syverson and Sara Lerner Shuster, Teaching Exceptional Children / Winter, 1995

BEST COPY AVAILABLE